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February 28, 1994

Mr. Steve Yeager
Deputy Executive Officer
Bay-Delta Oversight Council
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
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Subject: Bay-Delta Oversight Council Draft Briefing Papers

Dear Mr. *Steve* Yeager:

Thank you for the opportunity to review two briefing papers, prepared for the Bay-Delta Oversight Council, dealing with Delta water supplies and long range planning concepts. The issues discussed in these documents are of direct concern and importance to Contra Costa Water District. Our comments reflect our experience as users of Delta water and as analysts of the factors influencing Delta water supplies and water quality.

These papers, especially the draft "Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta Water Supply Paper" prepared by the Department of Water Resources, stress the importance of resolving Delta issues in dealing with the problems of water supply and environmental protection facing California. A note on Table 3 of the water supply paper states that the water supply benefit of a long term Delta solution will result from the elimination of the carriage water requirement associated with increased Delta pumping under the salinity control standards of Decision 1485.

One of the most important steps the Council should take as it deliberates the future of the Bay-Delta system is a thorough, quantitative analysis of the water savings potential of eliminating carriage water. Very little analytical work on this topic has been published or reviewed. The water supply paper presents a qualitative discussion of carriage water and the closely related concept of reverse flow at pages 18 and 19. The Department of Water Resources described the computational framework upon which the carriage water concept is based during the State Board's Bay-Delta Proceedings in 1987 (See Exhibits DWR 261-264 and the accompanying

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testimony). Contra Costa Water District reviewed the carriage water concept during the Bay-Delta Proceedings in 1992 (See Exhibits WRINT-CCWD 9-13 and the related testimony). The Contra Costa analysis leads to the conclusion that carriage water requirements are substantially overstated.

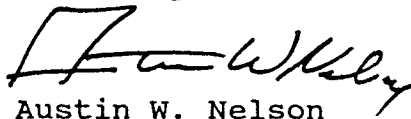
The importance of the carriage water issue extends to both water supply and environmental issues. It is central to the effective, efficient use of available water supplies for several reasons:

1. Long term water supply planning is based in significant part on elimination of the need to provide carriage water, as noted in Table 3.
2. Carriage water requirements restrict the quantities of water available for transfer across the Delta and increase the cost of water transfers, as discussed in the water supply paper.
3. Environmentally-based restrictions on western Delta reverse flow, or QWEST, a fundamental component of the carriage water concept, place serious restrictions on the water supply available for pumping from the Delta. The federal fishery agencies are currently reevaluating the role of QWEST on transport of fish from the western Delta to the interior and the effectiveness of QWEST limitations as a fishery protection measure.

Clearly, an objective technical assessment of the carriage water issue is an essential component of efforts to develop confident plans for effective resolution of Delta problems.

This discussion is centered on the carriage water issue because, from our perspective, it appears to be the most important single question raised by the water supply paper. I hope the Council finds these comments useful. Please call if I can answer questions.

Sincerely,


Austin W. Nelson

AWN/ce